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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Hollywood: Keep up the good twerk, celebs

Miley's moves, Kimye's spawn among the stories that set tongues wagging PAGE 14

Fitness: Just say no to barbed wire

Questionable workout trends, from scary themed runs to backwards running PAGE 16

YEAR OF THE CHAMPS

Metro looks at the stories that impacted us in 2013, including the Roughriders' run to Grey Cup glory

Saskatchewan players and personnel celebrate in the locker-room immediately after winning the Grey Cup on Nov. 24. Story, page 18.

LIAM RICHARDS/THE CANADIAN PRESS; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID VAN DYKE

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Local

Regina reporters choose their most impactful stories of 2013.

Underdogs' story on triple gold nets nod from MLA

A First Nations first. Lacrosse team gets recognition from provincial government after victories

ROSS ROMANIUK
Metro reporter

Writing a story about the triumph of an underdog is appealing, but much more so when your story plays a key part in the celebration.

That happened this past year after I learned of the stunning and inspiring achievement of a group of peewee lacrosse players from Saskatchewan's Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation.

Despite their reserve's somewhat remote location about a 45-minute drive northeast of Regina and only a gymnasium for their practices, rather than a legitimate box lacrosse facility, the boys and girls on the Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux peewee-A squad overcame the long odds this past summer to win what's said to be the first Saskatchewan championship in the sport for a First Nations team.

And the players aged 11 to 13 achieved that within days of taking a Regina city title and winning their division in a major international tournament in Calgary.

"It's truly a David and Goliath sort of contest," Russ Matthews, the team's coach and a teacher at the 125-student school, told Metro this month while putting the players through drills in the gym.

"It gives us a sense of identity — something to hold onto together."

My summer story on the team's three gold-medal victories caught the attention of provincial MLA Mark Docherty, a former lacrosse player who decided that the Standing Buffalo players should be honoured by the Saskatchewan government.

In November, the players and their families were on hand as Docherty read aloud the names of every one of the dozen or so team members and their coaches in the legislative assembly.

"I was proud and honoured to introduce them and acknowledge them," Docherty said at the time.

"I wanted it in … the historical record forever."

Team member Sandis Laswisse, 12, said the legislature tribute was "cool," though he suggested that his big thrill is just playing the game.

"Defence, offence, passing, scoring — it takes a lot of practise," Laswisse said.

"It's my favourite sport."

The school's box lacrosse victories have been particularly meaningful, said principal Stan Dirkson, following the suicides of three teen boys from the community of about 500 in the last year. In the wake of the tragedies, Dirkson noted, the Fighting Sioux's achievements have brought people there together.

The Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux peewee box lacrosse team, including coach Russ Matthews and manager Larissa Yuzicappi at the rear, celebrate the season of stunning regional, provincial and international tournament success with a team banner in the school gymnasium at the First Nation northeast of Regina. ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

Quoted

"When you win together, you walk together for a lifetime. That's what has happened here."

Russ Matthews, Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux lacrosse coach

The tale of six tails. Squirrels get their 15 minutes of fame

ALYSSA MCDONALD
Metro reporter

What happens when some squirrels get their tails tied in a knot?

A news story is born — and a particularly sappy one at that.

The Animal Clinic of Regina got a surprise in June when a city worker brought in six squirrels whose tails were fused together with sap.

Although quite uncommon, the veterinarian community does have a term for it — squirrel kings — since the rodents move together as one giant squirrel when their tails are entangled.

"It just doesn't happen too often," said Dr. Steven Kruzeniski, who works with the Animal Clinic of Regina.

This particular group of six were nesting near a pine tree when sap fused their tails together. A city of Regina worker found the young squirrels and brought them to the clinic.

The animals were sedated and the veterinarian team worked to untangle the mess of tails.

Their tails were then shaved of the matted fur and they were given antibiotics to prevent infection.

Dr. Kruzeniski says the young squirrels were lucky to keep their tails as in some more extreme cases they have to be amputated.

Each day, we try to learn something new. In 2013, 40,000 people visited the Metro site — mainly via Reddit and Internet community Fark.com — and gathered two pieces of information from this: a.) sometimes squirrels get stuck together and b.) this is called a 'squirrel king'.'

A helpful commentator suggested a better way to free them was a vegetable oil massage.

"Glad to know you are such an expert at lubing up some squirrel tail," another reader replied.

The squirrels were OK. They were released back into the city's green-space shortly after the procedure.

Metro is pleased to have made the squirrels of Saskatchewan safer, through reader knowledge.

Isn't this story nuts?

What a year! And then this happens: Workers are tasked with separating six squirrels that were fused together by their tails. FACEBOOK

NEWS 1

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I was writing a fluff piece and ended up with a kitten

Bringing your work home. Reporter's heartstrings are tugged after writing a story on the Regina Humane Society

MARCO VIGLIOTTI
Metro reporter

The first time I stepped through the doors of the Regina Humane Society (RHS) last July, my heart instantly dropped as I heard the sheepish meows of newborn kittens.

I was there for a story about how the RHS was swarming with around 85 furry felines (some housed at different spots in the city) — an abnormally high figure this late into the summer.

In the journalism world, a story about the local animal shelter being overrun with cats would be termed a (literal) "fluff story."

But, as someone with self-professed soft spot for cats, this story was a truly personal one.

Lisa Koch, executive director of the RHS, walked me through the array of cages at the shelter's office, each featuring several energetic cats.

She also explained the cost to adopt, as well as the commitment necessary to raise and care for a kitten.

Upon returning to the Metro office, I couldn't help shake the thought that I could help at least one of those cats find a good home.

By turning to the media, the RHS was looking to raise awareness of the backlog of kittens, hoping more people would be rushing to adopt the felines.

Yet, here I was with a girlfriend consistently looking to adopt a cat and I was just going to let the opportunity pass by?

Then again, we were also close to 3,000 km away from our hometown of Ottawa and still adjusting to life in Regina.

Still, both of us thought, what could be the harm of taking a peek at some of the RHS cats that were being housed at Pat's Pets.

Then, we met Gus.

With his snow-white fur and fox-like ears, he instantly caught our attention and immediately curled up in my girlfriend's arms when she picked him up before batting at her dangling, silver earrings.

As I picked him up, he stopped squirming and nestled into my chest.

There was no doubt that he had just made our choice for us. We were his humans.

Only a few months with Gus, and already it's tough to imagine our lives without him.

Gus cuddles up with his human, Metro reporter Marco Vigliotti. COURTESY MJ DESCHAMPS

How a story about bathrooms at U of R went viral

In September, we saw pageviews trickle, and then flood in for a simple story on the Metro website about a University of Regina bathroom with tubs that help people wash their feet before prayer. We were perplexed. Thousands of people in Regina can't be reading this, surely?

Then we dug deeper. Facebook was bringing us visitors in the tens of thousands from Kuala Lumpur, Tunis, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dubai and Cairo.

The university installed the "foot-baths" in a public washroom at its Riddell Centre, in order to allow Muslim students — many of whom pray numerous times a day, and wash themselves beforehand — to clean their feet in a way that isn't awkward and difficult through the use of regular sinks.

Two foot-baths, resembling large sinks with seats, were installed in both the men's and women's washrooms. University spokesman Dale Johnson said the total cost was about $35,000.

"There was a bit of a push from our Muslim students' society, as well as the students' union, and the university was very receptive," said Nathan Sgrazzutti, president of the U of R Students' Union, in an interview in September.

If the University of Regina sees a huge increase of international students in 2014 from the Muslim world, this might be one reason. On the Internet, even a story about a washroom can go global. METRO

The foot-baths at the U of R that garnered international attention. METRO FILE

#omg! Readers all a-Twitter over TEMP

Canadian author Douglas Coupland, best-known for his groundbreaking novel Generation X, visited Metro's head office just before the launch of TEMP.

The 20-part fiction series was published in Metro throughout November. Here's how Metro readers responded on Twitter:

@jason_michael: A sincere heartfelt Thank You to @DouglasCoupland for TEMP. I am a temp working for the government and your words continue to inspire!

@Teyemtenot: yet another reason why Metro is my favourite thing to read in the morning!

@hurricanediana: thanks for keeping me entertained for 20 a.m. commutes. Funny, surprisingly thought-provoking and relevant.

@KaT4_2012: read TEMP every day! #youguysnailedit #precariousworkiseverywhere Douglas Coupland is brilliant

@morgancadenhead: The collaboration between @DouglasCoupland and @MetroNewsCanada is fascinating. A truly unique way to approach fiction.

@SuzanneMaryse: i am loving this! ... Coupland nails the post-modern condition once again

@ctmwyn: The best part about @DouglasCoupland #Temp is the high concentration of #CliffHangers #Serialization

METRO

Web editor Hannah Zitner chats with Douglas Coupland during the author's visit to Metro's head office in Toronto on Oct. 28. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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National

Rob Ford, Senate scandal, Toilet Squirrel: 2013 was a big year. Here's the stories that inspired us, made us laugh or impacted our lives in other ways.

Metro's choice

Starman blows our minds

HENRIETTA WALMARK
Copy editor

Commander's log — stardate: 04-12-2013: "Here am I floating in my tin can/A last glimpse of the world/Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing left to do."

Few events in 2013 eclipsed Chris Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's Space Oddity. The video of the astronaut literally floating in his "tin can" as he sang his farewell to life aboard the International Space Station capped an extraordinary mission of firsts.

As the ISS orbited Earth, he tweeted stunning photos of the planet, chatted with William Shatner, shared videos of zero-gravity science experiments, did Q&A's with kids via satellite-links and performed an interspace duet with Ed Robertson.

Hadfield was having the time of his life, and took us along for the ride.

But what's really cool is what's been left trailing in the stardust. Hadfield allowed me and millions of others to experience the universe as never before, sparking our imagination and reigniting interest in the final frontier as a space worth exploring.

Toilet Squirrel. 'Peg newsroom goes nuts over soggy rodent

BERNICE PONTANILLA
Metro reporter

It was the summer story that had Winnipeggers — and likely others all over North America — looking warily at their toilets.

And it led to 15 minutes of fame for a St. James, Man. woman, all thanks to a little critter that somehow ended up in her toilet wet, scared and clinging for dear life.

Angela Campbell said it was her love of making people laugh that spurred her to contact Metro Winnipeg only hours after her encounter with and rescue of the now infamous Toilet Squirrel.

"Out of all of the toilets it could have climbed out of, I'm glad it was mine and that I could help it," said Campbell in a December interview with Metro.

Campbell and her partner heard a ruckus in their bathroom at about 7 a.m. the morning of June 12. After finding the squirrel in the toilet, Campbell used barbecue tongs to get it out.

Once Metro Winnipeg broke the story online, Campbell was inundated with requests for interviews from local, national and international media outlets.

The lighter side of the law. A dash of humour helps humanize VicPD

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro digital reporter

The Victoria Police Department has spammed Twitter followers with pictures of cats wearing hats.
COURTESY VICPD

On the Metro digital desk, we're well aware that funny stories are more likely to be shared by our online readers; it's an insight we share with the Victoria Police Department.

Last year, when a naive Reddit user posted about buying marijuana at the University of Victoria, VicPD Const. Mike Russell was there.

Using the "VicPDCanada" handle, Russell announced himself with a simple "cough," reminding users that the long arm of the law extends online.

Since then, he and his partner Bowen Osoko have been working to build the force's social media cred.

When cops busted drug dealers hiding cocaine in fake "Durasell" batteries in January, Russell penned a press release offering tips to others looking to secure their stash.

"Don't forget to label it 'not drugs' so we don't inadvertently look inside," he said.

"Being silly sometimes helps humanize our officers and make them more approachable. It's also just a lot of fun."

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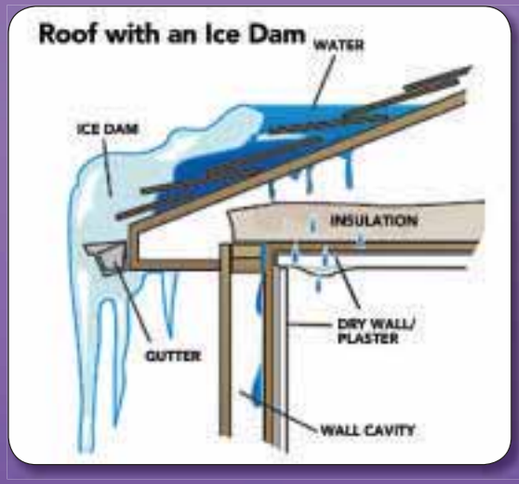

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International 2013 showed us the world is a fascinating place.

Egypt

'An uncertain reality'

DEENA DOUARA
Metro copy editor

An Egyptian woman reacts in Tahrir Square the day after former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, was ousted from power on July 4, 2013 in Cairo.
ED GILES/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Calls to relatives in Egypt are reminders that while the deteriorating state of affairs — of people's spirits and dreams and savings — is frustrating to behold from here, it's an uncertain reality — a nightmare — over there.

I was there this summer, in the leadup to the anniversary of then-president Mohammed Morsi's inauguration. I tried to understand the arguments: why Egyptians must protest; call for legal processes; stay home and give him a fair chance. I tried to capture that atmosphere for Metro, on TV and for the Huffington Post, all garnering strong reactions. As protests intensified, so did people's rhetoric. A prevalent "You're with us or with the terrorists" approach took root, serving to justify military crackdowns and delegitimizing nuanced opinions that didn't conform neatly to "pro-military" or "pro-Muslim Brotherhood."

The 2011 revolution was one of the most dramatic scenes Egyptians witnessed in at least three decades. There was uncertainty and disagreement and plenty of anger. But I believe it is 2013 that really changed Egyptians. Mistrust, contempt, revenge, hatred — these sentiments are relatively new, and they are frightening.

As repression, imprisonment and censorship have seemingly increased alongside an ever-declining economy, Egyptians now must too fear their neighbours. And divided, they say, is how they fall.

Keeping an eye on Syria

ALI ZAFAR
Metro copy editor

Nearly three years on, the Arab Spring has morphed into a disgruntled winter in Syria. While several Arab nations have toppled their dictators, Syria continues to be stuck between rebel strongholds and leader Bashar al-Assad.

Bearing the wrath of this power struggle are the citizens of the country. Around two million of them have been displaced and Amnesty International estimates that more than 100,000 people have been killed since the conflict started in March 2011.

I've seen atrocities committed both in the name of religion and by iron-fist rulers while living in the Middle East and South Asia, which is why the plight of Syrians is something I can relate to. Being considered a religious minority in Pakistan, I can empathize with the woes of religious minorities in Syria who are worried about their country under the control of Islamist rebels. It's why I'll keep a close eye on stories coming out of Syria in 2014.

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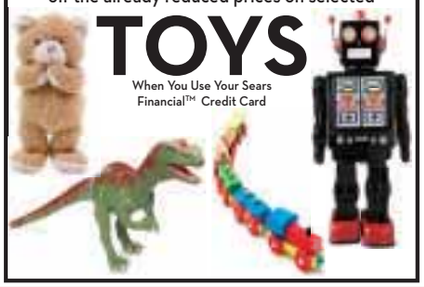

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Voices This is rare. Three Metro columnists are asked to write about their most memorable work this year. Turns out it can't be done without your feedback.

MY ONE LONG YEAR

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

Even though asking me to choose a favourite column is like asking me to proclaim a public preference for my goldfish over my hamster, I have dutifully reviewed Just Sayin' for the past year, and it turns out I have a lot to say, which might surprise a few people.

But I've managed to narrow it down.

Generally, I try to communicate my total bemusement with contemporary life. It's the best of times. It's the worst of times. It's the weirdest of times, right?

That makes for lots of material, such as:

CONTRIBUTED

Multi-billionaire Amazon's Jeff Bezos was in the news this year for buying the fabled Washington Post of Woodward and Bernstein fame for the equivalent of billionaire pocket lint: $250 million.

That's less, by the way, than what the Qatar Royal family paid for Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne's The Card Players — $259 million.

(Big deal. I paid $2.59 for The Card Players at the neighbourhood garage sale. I really love the look on the bulldog's face.)

Then there are those columns that are memorable for some really great bits, such as the one about the one-way expedition to Mars that was signing up potential colonists earlier this year:

ISTOCK IMAGES

"Therefore Mars One is looking for a special kind of person. Someone who is nuts enough to spend the rest of his or her life stuck in a climate-controlled hut the size of a portable toilet but well adjusted enough not to try to eat his or her fellow castaways."

What writing!

Of course, you can't write a column these days without having your own online anvil chorus, and I managed to hit a sour note writing about people who don't wear enough clothes on the beach. My protest went along aesthetic lines, not skin care, and the mob that formed outside my virtual door was not happy.

Here's just a taste: "Holy crap this is arguably the most ignorant thing I've ever read in my life."

You can't please all of the people all of the time, but if you try really hard, you can annoy all of the people all of the time.

Fortunately, I did manage to get an online standing O for a column I wrote about a movement to ban tipping that's just getting off the ground in New York and Chicago. One reader, named Crystal, gave me some unordinary positive feedback: "I don't usually write in to comment on articles of any sort, but after reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking. Excellent!"

Thanks, Crystal, I needed that. As you can tell, it's been a long year.

Reader writes

"After reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking." Crystal

2013 is over and I'm left holding the (mail)bag

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
readers@metronews.ca

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I've been told to pick one favourite 2013 column and reminisce, but my columns are like my children and once they're out in the world I will deny they are mine.

Instead, let's open the mailbag. After a year of columnastic genius I feel it's important for readers to provide a fresh perspective on how wonderful I am. For instance, one fan recently sent me a Facebook message that said my columns are "desperately TRYING to be funny. Alas, they just come off juvenile." To hear my work is desperately funny, yet childlike, is wonderful. I clicked on her page to thank her and learned she's graduated from "I didn't finish (2008)," which signals a level of brash independence and attention to detail I think we can all emulate. Under professional skills it said, "crack-smoking," which means she will soon be a writer (if she's joking) or the mayor of a large city (if she's not).

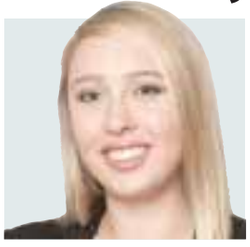
Mail moment

"Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" Online Fan

Another reader let me know my column is "pure dribble." I briefly assumed it was an insult and he had misspelled 'drivel.' Then I realized it was a basketball-related compliment, and that he considers me the Michael Jordan of Metro columnists. Pure, unadulterated dribble. Swish.

Some other actual mailbag highlights: * "Hypocrit much?" (More than you. I add an 'e.') * "Do your research." (No.) * "Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" (There are numerous problems here, but they are amply overcome by the use of three exclamation points. Bravo.) And that's the 2013 mailbag. See you next year, readers — older, but not wiser!!!

I swear, and I am a girl



SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
@MetroSheSays

As 2013 comes to a close, it's fun to look back at some of the memorable columns I've written over the course of the year. Back in June, I wrote a piece about swearing in public. I described how my boyfriend and I had been reprimanded by an overbearing parent at a neighbouring table after dropping a few expletives during a Sunday brunch.

From the inbox

"I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."
Anonymous reader

I was hardly advocating for an uncivilized society full of foul-mouthed brutes, but the column definitely struck a nerve among our readers.

I received a few letters from people who identified swearing in public as a generational problem. One gentleman wrote an email stating, "I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."

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I understand the importance of good manners, but I take offence to this notion that I should suppress any behaviour that is deemed 'unladylike' according to a 1950s standard.

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The good, the bad and the ugly

Year in review. The beginning of a new year, like the opening of a new film, holds so much promise... It's time for Metro to screen 2013's crop

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

It's time to bid farewell to 2013 with a look at the most disappointing films of the year.

Pacific Rim
Giant robots! Fighting giant sea monsters! Directed by Guillermo del Toro! This could've been so good, and obviously we thought it would be, but the results were just... not so much.

Only God Forgives
Maybe Nicholas Winding Refn was punishing people for liking his fantastic "Drive" too much, but this art-house meditation on masculinity, violence and retribution — we think? — was just a slog.

Star Trek Into Darkness
We might have been less disappointed in this long-awaited sequel if J.J. Abrams had just come out and said from the get-go that Benedict Cumberbatch was playing Khan. If only that were the only problem with it, though.

Jack the Giant Killer
Maybe it was foolish to expect Bryan Singer to do something cool and interesting with the old Jack and the Beanstalk fairy tale, but this one just fell flat.

Director Guillermo del Toro really dropped the ball on Pacific Rim — a movie that promised so much and delivered so little. CONTRIBUTED

Metro's picks

1. Gravity
2. Blue Jasmine
3. 12 Years A Slave
4. Hunger Games
5. Dallas Buyers Club

Oldboy
Spike Lee's plodding, uninspired remake of Park Chan-wook's 2003 cult classic at least makes a strong case for renting the original. Some things don't translate well, apparently.

Lovelace
A lot of foreplay that led to not very much of anything else, this exploration of the woman behind Deep Throat held too much back.

The Fifth Estate
Maybe it was too soon to explore the rise and fall of WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange, but it seemed perfectly reasonable that Bill Condon and Benedict Cumberbatch were up to the task. Apparently not.

Anchorman 2
Following up an iconic comedy is tough, but we're still not sure what Adam McKay and Will Ferrell were thinking with most of the choices here. Lesson learned: A little bit of Steve Carell's Brick Tamland goes a long way. Also, the film's jokes about racism and sexism actually just play as racist and sexist. Maybe next time, guys?

Enough Said
James Gandolfini's last leading film role, Julia Louis-Dreyfus' return to movies, another chance for Nicole Holofcener to examine adult relationships? This one had so much going for it. Too bad the end result is flat, uninspired and far too pleased with itself.

Metro pick

American Hustle

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

American Hustle's story of flim flam men and women, the FBI and a real life sting known as Abscam has emerged as my favourite movie of 2013. It's an entertainingly audacious movie that will doubtless be compared to The Wolf of Wall Street because of the similarity in tone and themes, but this time around director David O. Russell has almost out-Scorsese'd Martin Scorsese. Add to that unexpected and compelling performances from the a-list ensemble cast—Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence — and it adds up to the most fun I had at the movies this year.

We asked and you let us know that Gravity was your top movie pick for 2013. CONTRIBUTED

Reader's pick

What do you think? We recently polled Metro readers to see what film they considered to be the best of 2013. Gravity was the winner, hands down.

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Top headlines of Hollywood's 2013

They did what? It was a shock-and-awe year in celeb gossip, and Metro's editors never hesitated to chime in on the tabloid chatter

Love them or hate them, it was hard to get off the blinged-out, baby-making bus that was Kimye this year. GETTY IMAGES

Pop culture gets a bad rap, according to Metro's gossip editor, Dorothy Robinson. Sure, it's lowbrow (especially when Miley Cyrus decides to take her clothes off with no deference to taste or talent) and it births fame-hungry monsters (Kimye, you are a creation even Walter Winchell couldn't dream up). Yet, the hijinks and disasters of people who fly so very high take us away from the humdrum of everyday life.

Keeping up with Miley is a nice distraction from the fact that the cable bill is due. Watching Beyonce at the Super Bowl is a reminder of what is humanly possible if you have drive, talent and a whole lot of luck. And witnessing the untimely deaths of two stars reminds us that even our little lives are ones worth living. In fact, maybe we're the lucky ones, blessed to be outside looking in — instead of the other way around.

Who wasn't confused by this Canadian coupling? GETTY IMAGES

Cory Monteith's untimely death shocked the world. GETTY IMAGES

Here is what some of our editors had to say about the year in gossip:

"I didn't put the Royal Baby on my list because I thought that fell under news. Come on: Kate Middleton should NEVER be on the same list as Miley or Kim Kardashian. And although Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger wasn't earth-shaking, it was so delightfully weird that I thought it deserved a mention." DOROTHY ROBINSON

Dorothy Robinson's picks

1. Miley Cyrus' crazy year.
2. The evolution of Kimye (and the birth of baby North West).
3. Beyonce wins the Super Bowl.
4. Cory Monteith overdosing.
5. Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger.

"I, for one, definitely had Beyonce winning the Super Bowl on my list. Nothing can stop her, not even a blackout. I don't even remember who actually played. All I remember is the Destiny's Child reunion and Beyonce's black lace body suit. She wins."
EMILY LAURENCE

"I can't find any evidence supporting the theory that Kanye has a sense of humor; I fear he is gravely serious. We mere mortals just do not understand him."
T. MICHELLE MURPHY

I guess unlike other calculated 'Look at me! I'm no longer a Disney pop princess! I'm now a woman!' coming-out moments (see: Britney in the red pleather body suit; Christina's suggestive Genie in a Bottle), Miley's coming out seems raw and unpolished. She's going more for shock value than sex appeal. Which, honestly, is slightly refreshing. Just put the tongue away, girlfriend."
DOROTHY ROBINSON

Amanda on our minds

Reading between the Bynes

While it seems 2013 was the year of the squeaky-clean-songtress-turned-train-wreck-tabloid-queen, there was arguably no one who was featured as consistently on Metro's Dish page as former WB sweetheart Amanda Bynes.

Multiple brushes with the law, airborn bongs, driveway fires, neon wigs and one trainwreck of a Twitter feed meant that Bynes all too often became our feature focus.

Having recently received treatment for mental illness, we hope 2014 brings Amanda some peace, health and much-needed time away from the tabloids.
LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

Amanda Bynes GETTY IMAGES

Metro's picks

1. Miley Cyrus ditches her clean-cut image by twerking at the MTV awards, smoking a joint on air at the MTV Europe Awards, and working with photographer Terry Richards — and those are just some of her antics.
2. Amanda Bynes — see Liz Beddall's story to your right.
3. Kanye West and Kim Kardashian brought forth a baby and decided it would be fun to name her North.
4. Justin Beiber wreaked havoc in his neighbourhood with his driving, peed in a bucket, lost his monkey, and then had a drama-filled South American tour before heading to Australia for more of the same.
5. Angelina Jolie surprised the world by announcing she underwent a double mastectomy.

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LIFE 3

The five worst fitness trends of 2013 we hope don't return

Year-end review. Workouts can get boring from time to time but these ideas on how to switch things up missed the mark this year.

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
life@metronews.ca

It's not a bad idea to switch up your workout routine every now and then to challenge your muscles and stay motivated. But in the quest for new ways to do old exercises, some trends might be a tad questionable.

Backwards is just backwards.

Backwards running

Sure, running can get monotonous, but is running backwards the answer? There's a reason why people are doing it: According to a study by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, running backwards uses 30 per cent more energy than moving forward at the same speed. And, supposedly, it's easier on your knees. But let's face it; running backwards is an accident waiting to happen since — if it's not obvious — you can't see where you're going. Not to mention it looks ridiculous.

There is nothing wrong with weightlifting. But weightlifting in the heat doesn't make sense. ALL IMAGES ISTOCK PHOTOS

Boutique/hybrid yoga

If you're into yoga, there are a variety of styles to suit your personality, from ashtanga to moksha to yin. But now, you can mix those warrior poses with … hula-hoops, trampolines and martial-arts kicks. Or do yoga on a paddleboard, to disco music or even with your dog (doga). But yoga isn't about total body sculpting or getting a cardio workout — it's about quieting your mind. And it's hard to quiet your mind while doing disco moves in tree posture.

Extreme HIIT … for average Joes

High-intensity interval training (or HIIT) has many benefits: Bursts of vigorous exercise (think squats and burpees) followed by brief rest periods can burn calories — fast. That's why we've seen the rise of workouts like CrossFit, and the Insanity and P90X DVD series.

Run from this trend.

But along with the increase in popularity of these types of workouts has come an increase in injury, from slipped disks to torn rotator cuffs. According to a recent study published by The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 16 per cent of CrossFit participants quit the program due to overuse or injury. At least it's good news for orthopedic surgeons.

Themed runs (that involve barbed wire)

Working out should be fun, and hey, who wouldn't be motivated to run faster when being chased by zombies? While themed workouts from Tough Mudder to colour runs (running through clouds of coloured cornstarch) can be motivating or push you to challenge your endurance, any athletic endeavor that involves wading through ice water under barbed wire or being zapped by live wires is questionable. Perhaps next we'll start seeing live wires attached to treadmills so you'll get zapped if you're not running fast enough.

Hot weightlifting

Traditional weightlifting remains one of the best ways to build muscle. But one of the latest fads takes weightlifting to a new level — pumping iron in the heat. The concept behind Bikram yoga (where the temperature in the room is cranked to 40.6 C with a humidity of 40 per cent) is now being applied to everything from barre to spinning and weightlifting classes. But according to a recent study by the American Council on Exercise, turning up the heat doesn't actually burn extra calories. You just think you are, all the while risking dehydration and even heat stroke. If you like the heat, best to stick to Bikram.

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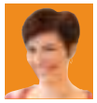
I'll take a cold cerveza with that

Year of Mexican food. You've been fooled long enough with cheesy dishes and store-bought salsa. Authentic Mexican is taking over — olé!



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Remember when Mexican food meant cookie cutter platters of oddly coloured white rice with a bunch of stuff covered in cheese?

You may have gotten a bowl of pre-fab corn chips and bottled salsa instead of bread as an appetizer.

Luckily, 2013 saw the rise of true Mexican food. It showed up everywhere, from the very hip food truck culture running away with the foodie heart to the top end of just about every urban menu.

Some of the foods that we can't get enough include pulled pork, fish tacos and burritos. And you really haven't lived unless you've found churros with the caramel-like dulce de leche sauce. (Don't forget the side of tequila, which was the beverage of 2013.)

Real Mexican food is wholesome, and it varies across the country from fish-based seaside to tropical fruit interiors, but they all have three things in common: corn, chili peppers and beans. The Europeans added pork, chicken and tomatoes and North Americans topped it all off with some flair.

Taco night is no longer spice from a box mixed with ground beef and corn shells, although, they are certainly retro-welcome. Think broader.

Chicken

Toss a chicken in the slow cooker with one of the many creative jars of salsa on the market and cook all day. Pull chicken from the bones and serve with tostadas, artisan corn and wheat tortillas plus toppings like frozen corn simply roasted on a cookie sheet in the oven.

Cole Slaw

Think about a grated cole slaw mix instead of shredded lettuce. Top with cocoa nibs, any manner of chopped chilies and any combo of fresh herbs. Serve with fresh lime juice and soda water with muddled mint (go ahead add some tequila!)

Pulled Pork

Pulled pork couldn't be easier. The low and slow oven versions create the best melt in your mouth recipes. Sauce options run the gamut from barbecue sauce to the chocolate and chili based mole sauce. This one pot wonder is the best crowd pleaser to come out of this Mexican trend. Pork shoulder or arm is an affordable (if fatty) cut that can't be ruined as long as you keep the oven temperature below 300 and the time at least an hour per pound.

Churro Dip

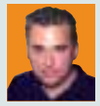
Since churros are hard to find, must be fresh and deep frying is a pain (not to mention crazy unhealthy!)

Why not go with the classic churro dip: dulce de leche and forgo the donut? This sweet milk caramel sauce can be now purchased jarred but the quickie cheater recipe using only sweetened, condensed milk is ridiculously easy. Use it to drizzle onto vanilla pudding, fresh fruit or chocolate cookies and you are right on the Mexican trend. Which will, by the way, continue for a few more years... **THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT WWW.MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM**

Mexican has gone beyond the smothered-in-cheese dishes. ISTOCK

Wine of the Year

2011 Vintage Port



LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

"I'm loading up on 2011 Vintage Port," says Peter Rockwell, Metro's expert for all things liquid. "Considered one of the best years in decades; all the big houses released a version this year. Dow's 2011 ($79.49) is spectacular; and will age well into 2063."

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SPORTS 4

Sports It was a highly successful year for the Saskatchewan sports scene. Here are the stories that made us cheer and smile with pride.

Roughriders display class on and off the field

ROSS ROMANIUK
ross.romaniuk@metronews.ca

It was a remarkable season for the Saskatchewan Roughriders, particularly through the eyes of a journalist who had recently entered the land of Rider Nation feeling a little green.

It wasn't that I moved to Regina last winter without any idea of the general success of the Roughriders on the field, and on their financial balance sheets.

As a staunch Blue Bombers fan in Winnipeg for the past few decades, I had been aware of what the Green and White means to Saskatchewan, and how ingrained the team is in this province's identity.

But upon arriving in the Queen City, the enormity of the local CFL franchise's success, and the way it's appreciated in its home community, was eye-opening.

Following so many years of my football frustration in Winnipeg, with a team whose most recent Grey Cup title came before the dawn of the Internet, I was accustomed to Manitoba pigskin fans dumping on the home side at every opportunity. And for all kinds of reasons.

The Bombers have long given their supporters plenty of ammunition to do so. As if their championship drought since 1990 weren't enough, the franchise took on the image of a circus a few years ago amid an endless string of coaching, front-office and public-relations blunders.

It's been nothing short of a Blue and Gold gong show: It hit a crescendo in 2009 when then-coach Mike Kelly derided fans who questioned his on-field decisions on a weekly radio call-in show, and it continued as Bombers brass held a news conference to address beer-cup "snakes" in the stands, and as the painfully slow construction of the team's new Investors Group Field turned into a joke instead of a source of franchise and community pride.

In Saskatchewan, it couldn't be more different — even with mid-season assault charges against three Riders players. The alleged nightclub incident in Regina that led to the charges has so far brought a ripple of negative attention, washed away by the season-long love-in among the team's faithful — and by its historic championship victory on home Mosaic Stadium turf.

The Roughriders' Grey Cup championship was a great triumph, not just for the team but also for Rider Nation.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

This past year, I've waited for a sideshow-style calamity — the kind I have seen so many times with the Bombers — to strike the Roughriders, along with fan finger-pointing and missteps by management.

I'm still waiting.

What I see, instead, are well-organized team promotions and programs completely bought into by the adoring fan base. I see a professional football club run how it should be, in a professional manner.

And in the mirror, I see a Bombers supporter impressed by Saskatchewan's football culture, and turning at least a little of his blue hue into a faint shade of green.

Saskatchewan's top five sports stories of 2013

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO
Photos by The Canadian Press, Getty Images and Red Bull

Riders capture glory at home

In front of nearly 50,000 adoring fans at Mosaic Stadium, the Roughriders defeated the Tiger-Cats 45-23 on Nov. 24 to claim the 101st Grey Cup.

The championship was the fourth in franchise history and the first won on home turf.

Saskatoon hosts Memorial Cup

Saskatoon welcomed the best in major junior hockey last May, when the province's biggest city played host to the 2013 Memorial Cup championship.

While the host Blades were eliminated early, the team did manage to beat the eventual champion Halifax Mooseheads in the round robin.

DeLaet makes his presence felt

Saskatchewan golf star Graham DeLaet stepped out into the international spotlight in 2013.

The Weyburn native participated in his first major tournament as a PGA professional when he travelled to Scotland last July for the 2013 British Open.

McDouble: Bros take on TV, hills

Saskatchewan's own snowboarding siblings Mark and Craig McMorris starred in an eight episode docu-series on MTV Canada in 2013 that presented a behind-the-scenes look at the Regina duo as they travelled and competed around the world.

Mark opened the season with a gold at the Dew Tour on Sunday Dec. 15.

Albers bursts on big-league scene

North Battleford product Andew Albers made his Major League Baseball debut as a pitcher with the Minnesota Twins last summer.

He started his big-league career by not allowing a single run in his first 17 innings.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You are on the threshold of a spectacular breakthrough. Which only goes to show that when you focus on a goal and follow up on it consistently, you can be a success. But don't get too full of yourself.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You need a change of direction and the planets will see that you get it. But don't worry. You will like what the next few weeks bring your way very much indeed.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are who you are for a reason. If you stop wasting time fantasizing about who you would like to be and focus on doing a better job of who you are, you will soon be both successful and happy.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Your problems are not as bad as you think, so quit worrying. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign of Capricorn will bring relationship matters to a head over the weeks, but there is no need to panic. You'll survive.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You may be tempted to change something that has worked for years, but is that a good idea? There is every possibility that you will go too far and change things in a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary way.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Play to your strengths and don't let what others are doing affect you in any way. There are some things you do better than most and those are the things you should be focusing on.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you have been taking a loved one for granted, this could be a tricky day. Somehow you need to convince them that your feelings are still the same but it will take more than just words.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Something important is about to happen and chances are you will enjoy it. Most likely it will have something to do with your social life, so get out into the world and smile big!

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You may come into money over the next few days but it would be wrong to count on it to get you out of trouble. The only way you are going to improve your financial situation is to cut back on your commitments.

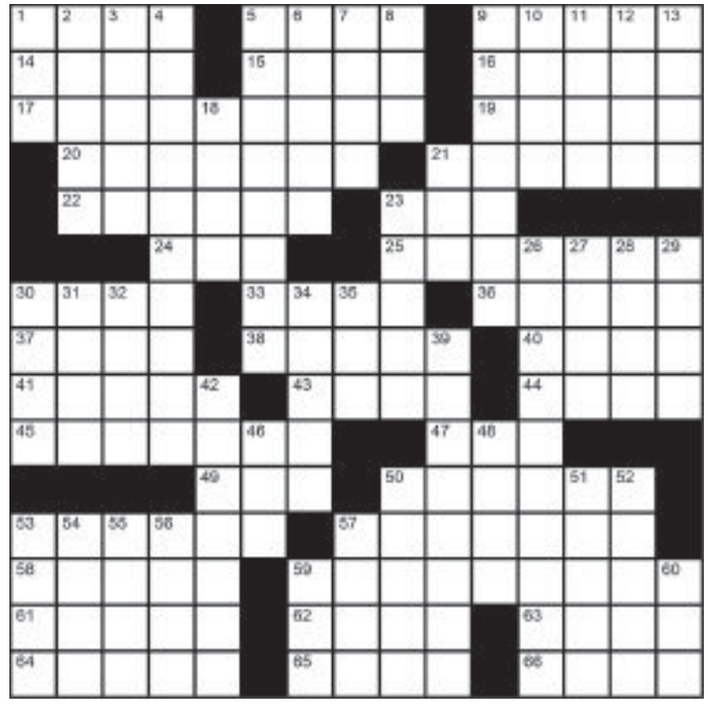
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
As cosmic activity in your sign reaches a peak over the new year period, you'll have to deal with situations that in the past you've tried to avoid. The good news is solutions can be found, but you've got to act now.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If your present approach to a problem is not working then clearly you need to tackle it from a different angle. Some people say you're too inflexible, too set in your ways to change. Prove them wrong.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Pay attention to what loved ones tell you over the next 24 hours because they can see something that you missed. If you listen to what they say and act on their advice, it could save you trouble. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

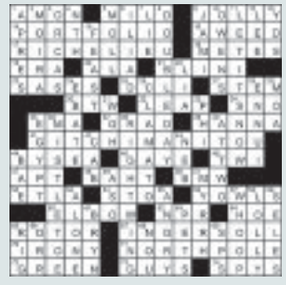
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Pasta, e.g.
5. 17th Greek letters
9. Mother-of-pearl
14. __ code
15. Nobleman
16. Once more
17. December 26th significance: 2 wds.
19. Rene of movies
20. Be drifting alone at sea ...but suddenly become joyful!: 2 wds.
21. Slightly adjusts
22. Accompaniment
23. Musical fifth note, variantly
24. Exclaimed "That hurts!", say
25. Shopping: Door-__ special
30. George Michael's '80s group!
33. Architect Mr. Saarinen
36. France's longest river
37. Rush
38. Pilotless aircraft
40. Gift Tag: To and __
41. Nimbi
43. Prince of Wales' motto, Ich __ (I Serve)
44. Dick Tracy's beloved, __ Trueheart
45. '50s TV series about a Quebec family, "La famille __"
47. Best, __-rated
49. Fee-fi-fo-__
50. North or South, in The States
53. Neil Young song: 2 wds.
57. Subscriber's extension
58. Wickerworker's willow
59. Traditional pudding of Newfoundland: 2 wds.
61. Billy Bob Thornton flick, "The Man Who __ There" (2001)
62. 'Myth' suffix
63. National Velvet author Ms. Bagnold
64. Tiffs
65. Foundation
66. Lines of travel, for short

Down
1. Taxi
2. Sprang up
3. T. __ (Some dinosaurs)
4. __-__, Quebec (Former PM Brian Mulroney's birthplace)
5. Viewed as
6. "In case you __ noticed..."
7. Toward the mouth
8. Slick
9. Arctic whale having a spiral tusk
10. Chill
11. House, in Havana
12. Board game
13. Biblical grandson
18. Sugar substitute, Sweet'_ __
21. Maple Leafs, on scoreboards
23. Elegant biscuit
26. Ski slope surface sometimes: 2 wds.
27. Contract
28. God of love in Greek mythology
29. Sleep stages, commonly
30. Gift __
31. Transport stuff
32. Prefix to 'phobia' (Fear of heights)
34. Canadian fashion designer Mr. Moralioglu
35. French queen's mate
39. Mire
42. Attempts
46. Amusing
48. __-dokey
50. Manet painting contemporary
51. Razz
52. 1966 Michael Caine film
53. Awesomenesses!
54. Office request [acronym]
55. Marge's daughter
56. Prince Michael of __ (Queen Elizabeth's cousin)
57 Costa __
59. Taradiddle
60. Hose-using rescue units, for short

Dec. 24th's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Dec. 24's Sudoku

3	9	1	7	8	4	2	6	5
8	2	7	5	3	6	4	1	9
5	6	4	2	9	1	3	8	7
1	7	5	3	6	2	9	4	8
6	8	9	1	4	7	5	2	3
4	3	2	9	5	8	1	7	6
2	5	8	4	7	9	6	3	1
7	1	3	6	2	5	8	9	4
9	4	6	8	1	3	7	5	2

For more puzzles and games during the holidays, visit metronews.ca/games

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